

# Young Friends General Meeting Online 31 October - 1 November 2020 Minutes

Those Present:

Not recorded.

Co-Clerks	Samuel Cooper and Zoe Marquis
Trustees	Alexandra Boliver-Brown, Liam Brighton, Sam Cooper, James Davies, Teala Dearden, Zoe Marquis, Tim Hall-Farthing, Grace Roberts
Coordinator	None

## 2020.10.1 Approval of the 2021 Budget (provisional)

James, our Finance Trustee, has presented the 2021 budget. We thank all of Finance Committee for their work in preparing the budget and explaining it, particularly in adapting it to the current strange circumstances.

This budget differs from our usual ones in various ways due to the impacts of COVID and the ways YFGM is adapting. For the same reason, parts of this year's budget have not been fully spent. There is some uncertainty over how many of next year's events will be online, and the budget has been set assuming that we'll have one in-person event.

We expect to need less money than usual in running YFGM, but we also expect to have a bit less income, as many of the charities which usually help to support us are overstretched at the present.

The level of reserves has been based on YFGM's higher spending in the 2020 budget rather than the lower expected spending in the 2021 budget.

YFGM provisionally approves the budget for 2021, on the understanding that the General Meeting will check over the item in February.

We ask Trustees and Finance Committee to review our spending over the coming planning weekends, so that if circumstances substantially change from what this budget expects, YFGM can effectively respond, taking advantage of any opportunities we may be lucky enough to receive, and reacting to possible problems (for example, the status of our administrative support in the coming recruitment cycle).

## 2020.10.2 Report From Planning Weekend Newcomers

We have heard from one of our planning weekend newcomers, Gray Wood. The report contained mention of what was required in threshing and scheduling everything down to single tea breaks. The nominations process and the community's enthusiasm for coming up with SIGs were nice to see. The worshipfulness of threshing meetings was commented on and a reflection of the thought that goes into the running of a YFGM was commented on: "nothing is taken for granted".

### 2020.10.3 Trustees Report

We have heard from Alexandra, our Convenor of Trustees concerning the annual report to the charity commission. The report is appended to these minutes. Alexandra told us the purpose of the report and gave a summary of its contents, especially noting our process of collective decision-making, the changes to our roles after our big roles review, and our relationship with and support from Friends House. A full report of YFGM planning weekend and general meeting locations was given. Mention was also made of the Special Interest Gathering held in November 2018 with the title "Trans and Non-Binary Inclusion". Our Value statement was reported on, and YFGMs stance affirming and supporting our trans and non-binary Friends was confirmed.

We heard that Trustees met last weekend to make sure that YFGM's governance was up to date and to keep everything rolling along; and Alexandra also spoke about the recent difficulties with our office support at Friends House.

### 2020.10.4 Trans and Non-Binary Inclusion

Ellie and Jennie (Elders and Pastoral) created a jamboard asking us to consider how YFGM can support members in preparing for and participating in business and other sessions before, during, and after YFGM. The feedback from everyone to this will be used to help shape how YFGM thinks about accessibility concerns and what Trustees can do to make the documents in advance as accessible as possible, especially in the context of future online gatherings.

We have heard from our friend Sally Wrenwood concerning the original aims and vision of the Trans and Non-Binary Inclusivity Working Group in producing a document containing bookings guidance for clerks/wardens of meeting houses.

We have heard a reflection that gender critical individuals within and outside Quakerism can present their views in a way that often appear very reasonable and without harm to Friends who are not highly aware of these issues, the jargon and dogwhistles in use, and the practical impacts these views can have. In addition, these views are not expressed in a set number of static ways. This can make it difficult for wider groups of quakers to see why YFGM is taking the stands it is.

YFGM retains the principle that we don't want to visit meeting houses which have taken the stance of welcoming groups that campaign on the claim that the goal of trans inclusion is incompatible with the goals of feminism or of liberation from gender roles and stereotypes. We recognise a need for further discernment on how this is to be done in practice, on the question of visiting Meeting Houses which have a documented history of disagreement with what YFGM holds to be essential parts of our testimony.

We hope to bring before February's YFGM gathering two items, first and most important a statement setting out YFGMs principles and saying that due to these principles we would not visit meeting houses which freely host gender critical groups. This statement should be simple in character, reflecting the simplicity of YFGM's position; it should clearly and stridently assert the principles we corporately hold: that trans inclusion is equality is Quakerism.

Supporting this, we hope to create a guide helping meeting houses to spot gender critical groups, which may wish to book rooms, which we could send on before us; this would not contain a list of prescriptions but would rather try to give tools to take part in this conversation.

Clerks will co-opt Friends who can help this process with their own skills and perspectives, including people who have been involved in drafting previous versions, those with experience in pastoral care, and Friends who can see what we produce with the eyes of meeting-house wardens. Individual Friends with comments should communicate with the clerks.

We also see an opportunity for future discernment on how YFGM might support individual Friends who wish to independently pursue the principles we hold in common.

#### 2020.10.5 [Nominations to Nominations Committee](#)

We appoint Hannah Stranex as Nominations Organiser, understood to be a member of nominations committee with a special responsibility for communicating with nominations members and Trustees, and making sure nominations meetings happen, especially in these unusual times.

Expected release is in October 2023.

## 2020.10.6 Co-options to committees

There were no co-options to committees this YFGM.

## 2020.10.7 Special Interest Groups

Special interest groups were:

Samhain, Quakers and times and seasons with Chloe Scaling and Tim Hall Farthing

Quakerism and trade unions with Laurence Hall and Rachel Evans

Create a bitmoji with Sally Wrenwood

Taskmaster with Jacob Webb and Grace Roberts

Kitchen disco with Hannah Cook

Effective altruism with Thomas Bell

Spiritual gifts with Jenny Herbert

We thank all of them for their work and their inventiveness in bringing these contributions to YFGM.

## 2020.10.8 Clerks' Offering

Our first online YFGM, in May, felt both painful, and celebratory. We missed each other dearly, but were also glad to discover that YFGM was still there, in a way that felt almost impossible. We even saw positives, with the ability to slip in and out and the format widening who could attend. We talked over long lunches, and settled into business sessions, and had fun and messed around, and felt that we were coming home.

Now, in October, with all of us by now getting very used to zoom and online meetings, and darkness falling early in the afternoon, there is less wonder and surprise; and the clerks, for two, are tired.

But still we have come together. We still have our strong sense of community, of belonging together. We are helping each other to adapt to these strange times. We worship together, and while our business sessions have focused mostly on keeping our projects moving forward and keeping YFGM itself ticking along, the Spirit still moves amongst us, showing unexpected clarity and power, a great current not always seen but always there to reach a hand out into.

We're all beginning to understand--not just with our heads, but with our bones--that we're going to be in this for a while. We're getting ready to gather online for a little while longer, it may take us a while to get everything right, but we do try. YFGM is digging in for the long haul.

We bloody well do still have each other. And we know it. And we're glad of it.